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# THE FLAME

Volume 51, Issue 1

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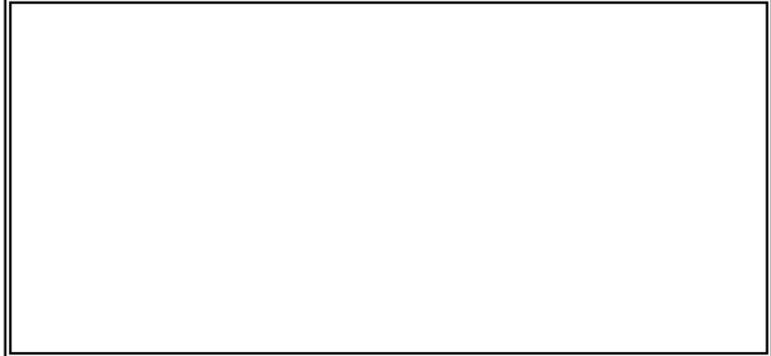
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## Thirty Three Years of Dedicated Service

Sue Lippert

January 4, 1935—December 24, 2020

If you combined all the languages of the world there would not be enough words to express our love for Sue Lippert. All of us have been touched by her amazing talent and her generous spirit. Truly a life well lived! If you would like to send her family a card or letter, this is the address:

Sue Lippert Family  
 % Debbie Kilgore  
 3801 South Elder Blvd.  
 Broken Arrow, OK 74011



Thank You 



All the staff at FUMC want to say thank you for your generosity. Your outpouring of love and support is truly amazing.

*Pastor Don*      *Cynthia Wilson*      *Lindsey McGee*  
*Joycelynn Davidson*      *Ruth Harbeson*      *Sue Lippert*  
*Larry Davidson*      *Cathie Gilliland*      *Dianne Clark*



# A New Year, A New Beginning



Pastor Don Griffin

As I sit in my office a few days before Christmas and write this article, I do so with the knowledge that most of us have had an exceedingly difficult 2020. Last year at this same point in time, I was full of hope and expectation of what 2020 would bring. Our church attendance was edging up and we were seeing some new faces in our worship space. Our church had a greater presence in the community in the fall participating in the Veteran's Parade and Christmas parade and was publicizing our events with banners on 14<sup>th</sup> street in front of Pioneer Woman Museum. We were planning a wonderful Meet the Composer event and our Team 3 was busy evaluating our ministries and looking for ways to improve the way we functioned as a church. I felt we were at a point where something wonderful was about to happen. Then the reality of 2020 and the COVID-19 virus hit our church hard.

I never in my wildest nightmares foresaw the virus that would so change the course of human history. We literally shut down our facilities in late March. Just when we would be gearing up for Holy

week and the celebration of Easter, we shut down everything. So many of our wonderful members experienced the horror of the virus firsthand. I know it was about as sick as I have ever been. Many were hospitalized and some in ICU. We even had one precious member die from this horrible disease. Though we resumed broadcasting worship services on Easter Sunday, it just was not the same preaching to an empty sanctuary. The only ones in the building that day were Larry and me. For the next two months we would record various parts of our worship service and Larry would edit them together to be broadcast on Sunday morning. I looked forward to my Thursday recording time because I love so much preaching and teaching, but it just did not feel the same without you present to worship with me.

We resumed live worship in June and allowed mask wearing worshippers to attend. We paid to have the facility professionally fogged and cleaned for safety. Larry has worked extremely hard in making sure that our building is cleaned each week with meticulous care. We continue to offer sanitizing stations, masks and encourage distancing in our gatherings. Worship attendance started out being in the 30 – 40 range and now we are all the way up to 55-70 on most Sundays. Viewership of our Facebook broadcast remain extraordinarily strong. We cannot gauge how many watch on channel 68 but know many call in when our service is not there. I suppose this is our new norm. We have had outside events each month so we could be together as a community, but I so miss our Wednesday night

fellowship meal and time together. I just love our church community and cherish every minute I get to spend with each of you.

Here we are at the end of 2020 and it is so easy for us to be discouraged about the future. Our church was facing some difficult times anyway with the number of deaths and people who have moved away in the past five years. Financially speaking, we were already looking at some challenges. The Covid-19 virus has only amplified that and sped up the process. We were already challenged with needing to grow the number of younger families for the future of our church. Sadly, it is the younger families that have been the slowest to return to worship. We still must find a way to share the message of Jesus Christ in a way that is relevant and connects with those of the younger generation. So, what am I feeling today as I write this article to you? I feel excited because I know God has a plan and I still believe the best is yet to come.

We have faced challenges, some more extreme than other churches with this virus but the same God that brought us together as a community of faith in 1893 and has sustained us through all the years of war, financial upheaval, previous viruses like the Spanish flu, changes in the culture around us, oil booms and busts, and all the other challenges, is the same God that will see us through this time of change. Two thousand years ago, God looked upon a simple man and a lowly maiden and  
(cont'd on page 4)



# January



2020

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
				1 8:00 Pick up Youth from lock-in	2	3
4 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Communion Food Sack Sunday 5:30 TYT	5	6	7 5:30 WOW	8	9	10
11 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship 5:30 TYT	12	13 6:00 Board of Trustees	14 5:30 WOW	15	16	17 9:00 UMW Planning Meeting
18 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship 5:30 TYT	19 12:00 Submissions for the Flame due in office.	20 6:00 Novels at Night	21 5:30 WOW	22	23	24
25 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship 5:30 TYT	26 Flame published to web page.	27	28 5:30 WOW	29	30	31

**JANUARY BIRTHDAYS**

Enloe Baumert	01/01	Mary Mason	01/13	Larry Murphy	01/30
Gerry McFadden	01/01	Keni Ray	01/13		
Deanna Varner	01/04	Carl Renfro	01/15		
Valinda Goeppinger	01/06	Deb Layton	01/22		
Thomasine Rhodd	01/06	Lee Evans	01/24		
Sheila Foxworthy	01/08	Nolan Overman	01/24		
Cole Wells	01/10	Donna Walker	01/25		
Carolyn Hopkins	01/11	Scott Jackson	01/29		
Joyce Shreffler	01/12	John Counter	01/30		



(Cont'd from page 2)

asked them to do something profound for the world. Their faith and willingness to do what God was asking changed the world. God is calling on you and me to be faithful and willing to do what is needed for the future of our church and community. If you are willing, God is ready to do something special in your life and through your life for the world. 2020 has been a challenging year but one where we should have grown spiritually. Challenges do that. Challenges also prepare us for the awesome things God has in store for the future. Here is to 2021, our best year yet.

Happy New Year,  
Pastor Don



### NOVELS AT NIGHT

Novels at night will meet on January 19th. If you have books you would like to recommend, contact Gineta.

Heartfelt sympathy to Diane Pendleton and family on the death of her father, T.D. Shreffler, to Gineta Swanson and family on the death of her mother, LaWanna Gann, the family of Gerry McFadden and to the family of Glenda Garrison.



### PRAYER CORNER

A prayer for Epiphany

We are drawn to your feet in worship. Your creation facing its creator, hearts laid bare by your light, humbly asking for your mercy. We come to you as a people in need of assurance and forgiveness. We come to you as a people in need of healing and wholeness. We come dependent upon your love. Draw us close. Enfold us in your arms. Fill us with your Spirit that we might reflect your light within this dark world, speak your Word with boldness and draw others to your feet. We ask this through your dear Son Jesus Christ.

Amen We welcome anyone who is interested in a lot of good fellowship and all kinds of mission work of the church to join us in planning.



**FEED THE HUNGRY**

Donations to N.E.R.A. are more important than ever. Sunday, January 3rd is Food Sack Sunday. If you are not comfortable attending church at this time, please consider bringing donations to the office during the week. Of course monetary donations may be made direct to N.E.R.A. or through the church. Remember to mark your envelope or check 'Donation to NERA.'



### UMW – Let's Get Started

On Saturday, January 17, 2021 there will be a UMW planning meeting held in the Fellowship Hall at 9:00 a.m. We will be deciding how we want to distribute our money to missions. We will also be making plans for the remainder of the year.

We hope that all members of UMW will come and help us plan for a meaningful UMW year. United Methodist Women has been and continues to be a very important part of the United Methodist mission work.

UMW meet each month on the first Thursday of the month. Deborah meets at 1:30 PM, Miriam at 7:00 PM.

Becky Hightower



I would like to take this time to thank all the singers and musicians who helped make our Christmas season so special. We had a really fun and festive time recording the Christmas music in the Welcome Center. Special thanks to Connie Van Ausdall for accompanying! It has been totally different this year as we try to maintain safe health practices, but we

### Music Notes by Joycelynn Davidson

have been able to create some very meaningful musical experiences.

I don't know what the spring will hold for us, but I do know it will be different than in the past. For one thing, Sue Lippert has had to step down as organist/accompanist due to health reasons. She has been a strong force in our music ministry for the past 30 years and she will be missed more than any of us can say.

A spring rehearsal schedule is pending, but we will be looking at Palm Sunday and Easter music soon. We have several solos and anthems recorded for use during January. If you would like to record a solo for use, please call and schedule a time with me and Larry.

Thanks go out to Amy Muegge for filling in as worship pianist until decisions can be made.



Hey youth I'm so glad that we have finished this year strong. This month starts a new year. We will continue to do TYT on Sunday nights at 5:30 and WOW on Wednesday nights at 5:30. I will be sending out more information about what we will be doing over spring break soon. I can not wait to see what this new year will bring for this youth group!

Blessings to all!!  
Lindsey McGee

